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# CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

## USAID Newsletter

### Regional News

January-February 2012



**Progress on Regional Energy Cooperation.** The third meeting of the working groups of the participating countries of the Central and South Asia Electricity Trade and Transmission Project (CASA-1000) was held in Almaty on February 1-2. Members of the working groups of all four countries (Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Tajikistan) participated in the meeting. Representatives of the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, USAID, IFC and IGC Secretariat also joined the meeting. The working groups' meeting followed a round table held on January 30-31 and organized with support of USAID's Regional Energy Security, Efficiency and Trade Project. *Photo: CASA-1000 working-group meeting*

### Kazakhstan



**USAID's RESET Project to Assist University Start Up New Study Course on Power Markets.** The USAID Regional Energy Security, Efficiency and Trade Project (RESET) and Almaty University of Power Engineering and Communications signed a memorandum of cooperation in February. USAID will provide assistance to the University in developing a new study course on the "Design and Operation of Competitive Electric Power Markets". The new course will be incorporated into the University's curriculum

and represents a significant innovation in the education of future power sector specialists. No educational institution in Kazakhstan or any other Central Asian state currently offers a course to prepare specialists whose expertise will directly and specifically relate to the operation, regulation and governance of competitive power markets. This assistance from USAID will significantly contribute to the further development of a competitive electric power market in Kazakhstan and the Central Asia region. *Photo: Mr. Daukeyev, Rector of AUPC, and Ms. Murphy, Chief of Party of the USAID RESET Project, sign the memorandum in Almaty*



**USAID to Address Kazakhstan Wheat's Climate Vulnerability on Regional Food Security.** Wheat is the primary staple crop for the five Central Asian Republics, as well as Afghanistan, and Kazakhstan is the primary producer. Kazakhstan is the world's seventh largest exporter, but its crop is extremely vulnerable to climate change. Spring wheat production is expected to decrease by 25-70% in the long term due to climate change, and the sector may be inadequately prepared to adapt. USAID/CAR has received \$1 million in funding as a Global Climate Change Integration Pilot to address the implications of

Kazakhstan wheat's climate vulnerability on regional food security. The program will serve as a model of how to approach food security and climate change linkages at the scale of a "food shed", as well as how to build a coalition of the private sector, government, and the research community around staple crops vulnerable to climate change. *Photo: Young wheat*



**USAID Opens Safe Drinking Water Project.** The Regional Mission Director Erin E. McKee met community members of Sarband Town during the opening ceremony of a rehabilitated water system completed by the USAID Tajikistan Safe Drinking Water Project. Community members assembled to celebrate this new system which provides safe drinking water to 14,921 people. The ceremony included a performance by local schoolchildren on the importance of safe drinking water and good hygiene to stay healthy. Like the other 25 partner communities where the project is helping to provide access to safe drinking water, residents of Sarband did not have reliable access to safe

drinking water. Residents, especially children, were frequently ill with infectious water-borne diseases. Today, 14,921 people in Sarband Town have improved access to safe drinking water, and as a result of the project's training many people, particularly children, have changed their health and hygiene practices. *Photo: Regional Mission Director Erin McKee trying out the new handwashing station at the Sarband No. 1 Secondary School*



### **USAID Inaugurates Energy Efficient Heating System for Orphanage.**

On January 24, USAID opened a new energy efficient heating system for Dushanbe Orphanage No. 4, together with city officials, orphanage staff, Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia technical experts, and other partners. The project promotes energy efficient technologies in residential buildings to reduce energy consumption while improving living conditions for residents. At the orphanage, the project is demonstrating the energy saving potential of an autonomous heating system that adjusts to weather conditions and the time of day. This system reduces the use of

electricity, reduces the load on the electrical network, and minimizes losses in delivering hot water in the system while ensuring a comfortable temperature for the children and staff in the building. It is estimated that energy consumption in Dushanbe's residential sector can be reduced by 30-35% through energy efficiency improvements, saving money for residents while increasing the effective capacity of Tajikistan's fragile energy system. *Photo: Children in the orphanage now have improved living conditions and a more comfortable living and learning environment*



### **USAID Workshop for Creating Educational Games and Activities for After-School Resource Centers.**

The USAID School Dropout Prevention Pilot Program gathered 10 educators in Dushanbe to generate learning activity ideas that teachers can use in after-school resource centers for grade 9 students who need extra academic help. For five days at the end of January, these educators, including a senior specialist from the National Teacher Methodology Center, teachers from the National University, and Pedagogical College and school teachers, wrote, presented, and tested a variety of educational games and activities aimed at supplementing what ninth graders learn in their regular classes. About 80 activity ideas and lessons were generated and will be introduced to teachers working in the after-school resource centers. Grade 9 students who have academic, behavioral and/or attendance problems are considered at high risk of dropping out of school and will be invited to attend the after-school program. In addition to providing extra academic help, the program is also designed to create a

warm, social atmosphere that students enjoy. Resource centers are just element of a program designed to support the students who are most likely to dropout, in an effort to reduce the overall dropout rate in Tajikistan. This program includes a system for parents and schools to work together to monitor student attendance, homework and classroom behavior. The program will be expanded in March to five additional districts of Khatlon province. *Photo: Workshop participants/educators demonstrating their learning activities*



## Turkmenistan



### **Turkmen Youth Sponsored by USAID and Chevron Took Second Place.**

The Junior Achievement Asia Pacific Company of the Year Competition, jointly organized by Junior Achievement Worldwide and FedEx Express, took place February 15-17, in Jakarta, Indonesia. The best 16 youth companies representing 11 countries from the region (China, Guam, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Turkmenistan) competed. The team from Turkmenistan, sponsored by USAID and Chevron Nebitgaz, took second place. The program is designed to foster entrepreneurial enthusiasm and deliver business skills for young people.

## Uzbekistan



The first in a series of quarterly Horticultural Exchange Programs initiated by USAID within the AgLinks Plus project took place January 13 to February 6 in California. The main theme of the Program was "Planting, Pruning, and Trellising of Fruit Trees and Grapes" with 10 participants, three from the public sector and seven from the private sector. This was conducted in collaboration with the University of California at Davis, which facilitated Uzbek and U.S. agriculturalists' exchange of information and best practices. The exchange visitors participated in hands-on visits to over 25 sites in northern and central California including farms, private companies and

organizations involved in orchard production, sorting and packing, storage, processing, retailing and consumption. They experienced new techniques in trellising, grafting, budding and pruning methods used throughout the California horticultural industry and noted how to best adapt these practices to their own circumstances upon return to Uzbekistan. A second horticultural exchange programs is scheduled for May-June and will focus on best nursery practices.



**Training on Project Design and Management.** On January 11-12, USAID's Local Development Initiative organized a project design seminar in Samarkand, which was conducted in cooperation with the Initiative's state partners, the Independent Institute for Monitoring Civil Society Formation and the Academy of State and Social Construction. The training was organized for the representatives of five targeted districts of Uzbekistan and enhanced the participant's knowledge on the design, preparation and management of small scale infrastructure projects. The training materials, originally prepared for the Tajikistan component, were translated into Uzbek and Russian.

### **For more information about USAID in Central Asia go to:**

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Or, contact Leanne MacDougall, Regional Development Outreach and Communications Specialist at: [Imacdougall@usaid.gov](mailto:Imacdougall@usaid.gov)